

Public Participation at Library Board Meetings

Approved by the Library Board of Trustees on May 20, 2024

The Library Board of Trustees recognizes the value of public comment and the importance of allowing community members to express themselves on library matters of interest.

The Board offers public participation at Board meetings in accordance with the procedures outlined below. The Board applies these procedures to all speakers and does not discriminate based on the identity of the speaker, content of the speech, or viewpoint of the speaker.

In order to allow the Board to conduct its meetings in a productive and efficient manner that assures that the regular agenda of the Board is completed in a reasonable period of time, public participation will be guided by the following rules.

- Members of the public wishing to address the board may do so at any regularly scheduled meeting during the agenda time reserved for Public Comment. The Board meeting schedule is posted on the Library's website and Community Bulletin Board.
- A maximum of 30 minutes of public participation is permitted at each meeting.
- Any resident of the Montgomery County having a legitimate interest in actions of the Library Board is eligible to participate during the designated Public Comment portion of the meeting.
- Any person wishing to participate shall register at least twenty-four (24) hours in advance by submitting a Public Participation Form. Forms may be submitted online or delivered to the Library Director's attention at the Library.
- Individuals may not register others to speak during public participation. No individual may cede their allotted speaking time to another individual.
- All visitors are required to sign in before the Call to Order. Visitors who have indicated a desire to speak will be recognized in the order in which they have signed in, unless the presiding officer determines it necessary to alter that order.
- Participants must first be recognized by the presiding officer and will be requested to preface their comments by an announcement of their name, county of residence, and group affiliation (if any).
- Each statement made by a participant shall be limited to three (3) minutes in duration. The Secretary will keep track of time.
- No participant may speak more than once.
- All statements shall be presented from the lectern and directed to the presiding officer; no person may address or question Board members individually.
- Audio or video recordings are permitted. The person operating the recorder should contact the Library Director prior to the Board meeting to review possible placement of the equipment, and must agree to abide by the following conditions:
 - No obstructions are created between the Board and the audience.
 - No interviews are conducted in the meeting room while the Board is in session.
 - No commentary, adjustment of equipment, or positioning of operators is made that would distract either the Board or members of the audience while the Board is in session or disrupt the meeting.
- The presiding officer may:
 - Ask questions, interrupt, warn, or terminate a participant's session when they make comments that are repetitive, obscene, too lengthy, comments that constitute a true threat (i.e., statements meant to frighten or intimidate one (1) or more specified persons into believing that they will be seriously harmed by the speaker), and/or as otherwise permitted under the law;

- Request any individual to stop speaking and/or leave the meeting when that person does not observe reasonable decorum or is disruptive to the conduct and/or orderly progress of the meeting;
- Limit the number of speakers to three (3) in favor of and three (3) in opposition to a given topic.
- Request the assistance of law enforcement officers in the removal of a disorderly person when that person's conduct interferes with the conduct and/or orderly progress of the meeting;
- Call for a recess or an adjournment to another time when the lack of public decorum so interferes with the orderly conduct of the meeting as to warrant such action;
- Waive these rules.

Trustees will listen and take all comments under advisement. It should not be expected that the Board will take immediate or official action on any subject brought before it.